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THE

MOSAIC SABBATH

AND THE

CHRISTIAN SABBATH

CONTRASTED AND EXPLAINED;

A CLEAR, FULL, AND FREE DISCUSSION

EARNESTLY OFFERED,

IN THE PRESENT PUBLICK CIRCUMSTANCES,

TO THE CONSIDERATION

OF THE BRITISH NATION, AND ITS AUGUST SENATE.

BY

J. L. CHIROL, A. M.

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS,

AND MINISTER OF THE CHURCH CALLED LE QUARRE,

(LITTLE DEAN ST. SOHO SQUARE.)

[illegible] record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.—
ROM. x. 2.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY SPRINGHAM WILSON, 88, ROYAL EXCHANGE; AND MAY BE HAD
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BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA

ERRATA.

Preface, page 4, line 9, instead of "on our *parts*," read "on our *part*."

Page 1, last line but one, instead of "*Scriptures*," read "*Scripture*."

Page 35, line 21, instead of "*its* existence," read "*His* existence."

PREFACE.

It is certainly not aiming at *popularity*, to publish a work like the present in opposition to the opinion of the publick so clearly manifested in the numberless petitions which, from every county, town, village, and parish have been presented to the Legislature on *the Observation of the Sabbath.**

What can be then our motive for introducing the subject to general notice? Nothing but the persuasion, that, as it has not

* Let us be ab ovo well understood on that point which is the great object of this discussion: God forbid that we should object to a *better* observance of the Sabbath, if it be consistent with that which the real observance of the day demands! But we object to that *mode* of the observance, which religion does not require, and which is *mere commandments of men.**—*Do not make thyself overwise; do not think above what is written: but think soberly; and be wise unto that which is good; and simple concerning evil, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another*: *and why shouldest thou destroy thyself?*†

* Matth. xv. 9. Eccles. vii. 16.
† Rom. xii. 3. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 6.

been considered before in its proper view, it may, discussed, as it is under, be highly important, in the present circumstances, and have the desired effect of correcting that publick opinion itself—would to God that we could make the whole nation, in one collective assembly, (and its august senate), acquainted with the contents of this writing! It is no *presumption*, on our parts, to express ourselves so confidently; and to assert, that the arguments here adduced must bring conviction to the mind of every impartial reader: No: If we speak in such a decisive manner, it is because the work is not the mere production of our own mind, but rests on the sacred volume, the unanswerable arguments of the most learned divines, and incontrovertible facts: All that we request from the reader, is, *first*, that he should not judge hastily, or skim over the surface of the work, but dive into it, and read it through; otherwise he cannot form a right opinion of it; and, in the *second place*, that he should peruse it *with an honest, and good heart*;* a mind free from

* Luke viii. 15.

prejudice and obstinacy, and *searching only the Scriptures, (like the Christians of Berea,) to see, whether* that which we have recited is really contained therein.* Then, indeed, the result of such a perusal must be this: That, he who is *involuntarily ignorant* shall be enlightened—the impious scoffer....corrected—the malicious calumniator....obliged to recant—and the *walker after his own lust,*† ....undeceived, by learning, that there is a better, and a much more sure way to atone for his sins, than to cry—*The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord!* ‡

The *Ultra-Sabbatarian* alone may perhaps reject the book, as soon as he perceives what its object is: but that rejection itself what will it prove? That *he will not see, nor hear, nor understand, what he is previously determined not to see, not to hear, not to understand, lest he should* be turned from his way of thinking, and *converted.*§

Some of them have already accused us, not to our faces, but clandestinely, of dis-

* Acts xvii. 11. † 2 Pet. iii. 3. ‡ Jerem. vii. 4.
§ Matt. xiii. 14. 15.

regard for *the observance*, (they should have said of *their* observance) *of the Sabbath:* this work, which had been intended for publication long before we heard of the imputation just alluded to, is the best answer to their slander: satisfied, as we are, with preaching, to the best of our ability, the pure, simple, primitive, undeniable doctrine and morality of the *Gospel of Peace;* and led, by our profession, and principles, to give an example of a serious life, we are above their attack: after the fatigue created, by the performance of our arduous duty, and some subsequent time employed in administering either private instruction, or advice, or consolation, or any assistance, in our power, we have never allowed ourselves, on the *Lord's Day*, any indulgence, (and that even but in our family) except that rational, innocent recreation which reanimates both body and mind, and which King David himself enjoyed to keep up those elevated sentiments of piety which characterize most of his admirable holy songs.

THE MOSAIC SABBATH

AND

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH

CONTRASTED AND EXPLAINED.

It is scarcely possible to conceive how two different opinions can exist on the *observance of the Lord's Day:* yet, it is a fact which publick events that have greatly agitated the country have so sufficiently established, that it stands in need of no further proof.

To prevent, as much as it lays in our power, a greater agitation, or to cause it to subside altogether, is the object of this little work, which settles the question in the only way it can be settled, viz., by giving a proper attention to the Holy Scriptures, which, without being *wrested** from its natural and obvious sense, is plain

* 2 Pet. iii. 16.

enough on the subject, if it be only consulted. Without that attention, we may go *too far*, and we may go *not far enough*. *Too far*, as to what is *mere doctrine, and commandment of men*:* *not far enough* as to what is prescribed by *the word of God*, which fully establishes,—*that to obey is better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices*.†

This mode of considering the question, by the Scripture has then this advantage, that it avoids *two extremes* equally dangerous. 1st.—The *rigour* of the Ultra-*sabbatarians* who wish to substitute *unwarrantable observances* in the place of the *rational service acceptable unto God*;‡ to keep up, under the law of grace, the *spirit of servitude* which characterized the ancient law; and to turn the *Christian Sabbath* into a *Jewish Sabbath*. 2nd.—The *licence*, or, to be more explicit, the *scandal* of so many *pretended Christians*, who, under the specious pretence of the *liberty* procured by the Gospel, or from any other equally unjustifiable motive, neglect more or less the *observation of the Lord's Day*.

To give, in limine, a distinct idea of the plan of this tract, we have divided it into *four principal parts*.

* Matth. xv. 9. † 1 Sam. xv. 22. Mark xii. 33.
‡ Rom. xii. 1.

The *first* shows that the Sabbath enjoined in the fourth commandment is *entirely ceremonial*, and concerns the Israelites only.

The *second* proves, that although *ceremonial*, we ought to retain of the law of the Mosaic Sabbath, *its spirit*, which is *essentially moral;* or, in other words, that *the necessity of a publick worship*, on which the Jewish Sabbath was founded, does not regard the *Christians*, less than the ancient people.

The *third* is to establish the *importance* of having a day set apart, with respect to the celebration of that *publick worship;* and the *propriety* of that day being fixed on the *Sunday*.

The *fourth* is to explain in *what manner* the Christian Festival of Sunday ought to be celebrated, and *hallowed*.

In this discussion we most earnestly disclaim any intention of hurting the feelings of any party or sect; being ourselves perfectly free from all party spirit and feeling: *We speak before God in Christ, that all what we have done is for edifying*:*—that our sole object is to diffuse what appears to be generally unknown; the plain truth, the scriptural truth, the unanswerable truth, on the *nature of the Sabbath:* But, at the

* 2 Cor. xii. 19.

same time, we declare, that were we unworthily, from any fear of *criticism*, or any other base consideration, to hold our peace, and keep back needful remarks, only because they may be found *unpleasant*, we should consider our silence to be criminal. With that plain avowal, we rest all our hope of success on that divine Power *in whose hand are the hearts of all men; who turneth them whithersoever He will; and who sometimes chooses the weak, the base, the foolish, and the despised things of the world, to confound the things which are wise and mighty.**

FIRST PART.

THE SABBATH ENJOINED IN THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT IS ENTIRELY CEREMONIAL, AND AS SUCH CONCERNS THE ISRAELITES ONLY.

The Sabbath is a festivity instituted, by God, in commemoration of the creation of the world, which was accomplished, on the sixth day, as it appears from Genesis,† and by the law of

* Eccles. ix. 1. Prov. xxi. 1. 1 Cor. i. 27.

† Gen. ii. 1. 2. 3.

Exodus,* in which it is said, that, in six days, *the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh day.*

That ordinance had two principal objects: The *first* was to keep in the mind of men, by consecrating that day to the service of God, the remembrance of the creation of the world; and by that remembrance, to prevent *idolatry*, and the adoration of creatures. In pursuance of that consecration of the Sabbath, God established, that there should be, on that day, a *holy convocation*,† and a *particularly regular and solemn worship.*

The *second object* was to give to men, and to all animals, a *day of rest*, or relaxation, every week.

That double object was then, *one of religion. Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.* The other of *humanity: Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord, thy God: In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.* ‡

* Exod. xx. 10. 11.

† Levit. xxxiii. 3. Exod. xxxi. 12. 17.

‡ Exod. xx. 9. 10.

Certainly nothing could be more wise or more worthy the paternal care of the Supreme Being than that law which served to establish a good order in human life, by an alternative of *labour* and *rest*, well accommodated to the wants of man: It is thus that a good Father, though He accustoms his children to a life of industry, is yet very solicitous not to over fatigue them, or to oppress them by too long and wearisome occupations; and that He Himself invites them now and then to suspend their work, and to intermix it with innocent recreations, which contribute to renew their vigour, and to cherish, in their hearts, sentiments of gratitude and love for their benevolent Father.

That condescension of God for his people tended then, in a great degree, to excite their devotedness to His service: For, while *relaxation* was given to the *body*, which was proper for the restoration of its strength, that relaxation of the *body* was turned to the profit of the *mind*, by impressing the whole nation with the ideas, and the sentiments which are the essence of piety; and especially by engraving strongly this fundamental truth; that, as all the parts of the universe were the work of God, He *alone* should be the object of their *trust* and *adoration*.

But, besides those two general views, the

Sabbath had, *afterwards*, a *particular* one, with respect to the people of Israel, namely, to commemorate *their deliverance from the fetters of Egyptian bondage*, as that is formally expressed in these words: *Remember, that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt; and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm; Therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day*—Hence the Sabbath is called in Scripture, *a sign between God and the children of Israel, for ever, and a perpetual covenant.**

Here then now rises a *question*, which has been much agitated among the learned—Whether the Sabbath was instituted, from the beginning of the world, and merely renewed after the coming out of Egypt? or, whether it is a law, and a ceremony which God instituted in behalf of the people of Israel, to deter them from idolatry, by the remembrance of their creator and deliverer? In short, whether the Sabbath belongs only to the *ceremonial law?* or, whether it is a *general law* which regards all mankind.

The following are the *reasons* which favour the opinion, that it is a *ceremonial Law*, concerning the people of Israel.

* Deuter. v. 15. Exod. xxxi. 13. 17.

1st. The Scripture does not make the least mention of the *OBSERVATION of the Sabbath*, before the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, although mention be often made, of the worship which the Patriarchs rendered to God. Now, is it likely that the sacred historian should have omitted such a holy and solemn *Law*, as is that of the Sabbath; a *Law*, the violation of which was punished with death; in short, a *Law* which having been enacted from the beginning of the world, ought to have been common to all men; and that he should not have recited it till two thousand five hundred years, after its institution? True, it is, that, before Moses, mention is made of the number of *seven*, as of a sacred number, but it is never relating to the *observation of the Sabbath*. The same historian who has so carefully transmitted, and with so many detailed circumstances, the *travels* of the patriarchs, would he not have recorded, sometimes at least, *when* those patriarchs were obliged to interrupt those travels, in order to observe the Sabbath? Or, what is as extraordinary, would the patriarchs have neglected to observe the Sabbath?

2d. The holy Scripture never speaks of the Sabbath, but as of *a sign between God, and the children of Israel;* as a *privilege* which was

peculiar to them; as a *rest* which God had given them; as a *festival* which distinguished them from all the other nations: *Speak thou unto the children of Israel, saying: Verily, my Sabbaths ye shall keep: For it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you,* that is to say, *that hath separated* you, from all other people.*

The prophet *Nehemiah* speaks also of the Sabbath as of a special favour from God to the Israelites; and he associates that law with the others which he had given them, by the hand of his servant Moses.†

In *Ezekiel*,‡ the Sabbath is reckoned one of the first favours of God towards his people, and one of the principal distinctions which he had honoured them with.

Not differently has the Sabbath been considered, by several of the most *ancient* authors who have made mention of it. *Philo* § formally includes the Sabbath among the laws of Moses. *Josephus*‖ always speaks of it, as of

* Exod. xxxi. 13. † Neh. ix. 14.

‡ Ezekiel xx. 11. 12.

§ De decalog. 585.—De vitâ Mosis 529.

‖ Josephi Antiq. Lib. 1.

a ceremony peculiar to the Jews—Such also was the sentiment of the *ancient fathers*: *Justinus Martyr** said to the Jew Tryphon,—"that the Sabbath was given to the Jews, on account of their transgressions, and the hardness of their heart. *Theodoret*† says also, that the observation of the Sabbath was given to them, to distinguish them from the other nations of the world.

3dly. The observation of the Sabbath has such characteristics as clearly prove, that it is a *ceremonial law*, peculiar to a certain nation, and not a *general law* given from the beginning of the world. Two instances amongst several others may be adduced.—*First*, the scrupulous obligation to spend twenty-four hours, without doing absolutely any thing; and that, under pain of death, if any thing was done. Simple reason alone teaches us, that, one day is not more holy, before God, than another; and that he cannot take delight in idleness considered as such. That law must therefore have had for its object, a *particular people*, a people under certain circumstances. The Israelites were coming out of Egypt, where stars, men, animals, plants, and all the creatures were ranked among

* Dialog. contra Tryph. † On Ezekiel xx.

the Deities, and they themselves had adored them. It was necessary to institute a day which should constantly bring down to their mind, the truth of the history of the creation; and none could be more appropriate to that purpose, than the seventh day for the reason above recited.

Besides, they were coming out of a country, where they had been forced to uninterrupted labours; and consequently it was right, that the *rest* of that entire day should be a perpetual symbol of the *rest* which God had procured them; and that it should be wholly consecrated to Him. *Secondly*—It is not a crime *to gather sticks*. The Lord did not punish other offences however heinous, with the pain of death,—a punishment which He inflicted on those who were guilty of that act on that day: But it would have been a mark of the greatest ingratitude, a profanation, and even an impiety, on the part of the Israelites, if they had not restrained themselves one day from violating so easy a command as not to *gather sticks*; and from not depriving God of a single moment of the day which He had entirely reserved for Himself.

4thly—If the law of the Sabbath bound all men and all the nations of the world, it would never have been abolished, as it has been; and

the Christians would have observed it, in all ages, as they did at first from mere condescension to the Jews. Moreover, Christ would never have said of such a law, *that the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day, and can observe it, or not observe it;** that is, that, if necessity could, in several occasions, dispense with the law of the Sabbath, in that which concerned the *ceremonial* of that law, (as there is a strong instance in 1 Maccab.†) a fortiori, the Son of Man, that is, Himself who was to *abrogate all the Mosaic economy*,‡ could, in the present case, when He uttered those words, dispense his disciples from the rigid observance of the Sabbath. Nay, He would never have said, *that the Sabbath was made for man; and not man for the Sabbath.* For there are *three* very remarkable things in the answer which he gives to the Pharisees, on his disciples, *being hungry, and plucking the ears of corn, on a Sabbath-day.*

1st. The Saviour puts in a parallel, the *ceremony of the Sabbath*, with the *law* which prohibited every one, but the priests, to *eat the shew bread.*

* Matth. xiii. 1. 8. Mark ii. 27.

† 1 Maccab. ii. 32. 41.

‡ Jerem. xxxi. 31. Coloss. ii. 16. 17.

2nd. He marks, that the service of Christ who is Greater than the temple, dispenses with the *ceremonial worship of the law*, and *drives away* the sabbath, as the Jews used to say.

3rd. By adding, *that the Sabbath was made for man; and not man, for the Sabbath*, Jesus has considered the Sabbath under no other light than that of a ceremony instituted, not with the view that man should suffer from it, by turning the law to his prejudice, by a too severe explanation of it; but for his own use, advantage and benefit; that is, that God requires not absolutely the *ceremonial*, and *purely external duties*, such as the Sabbath; and that those duties ought to yield to those prescribed by *virtue*, because man was made, or created for these *latter* which are not of mere institution, but are commanded by reason alone, as well as by the law.

Such remarks from the Saviour, placed then, beyond any question, the Sabbath among *Jewish ceremonies*. Other particulars also in the fourth commandment evince, that it is a *ceremonial commandment*.

In six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore, the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it. God, by these words,

gives the Israelites clearly to understand, that the pretended Deities which the Pagans worshipped, were all the work of his hands; and that consequently, they would act the part of an insane people, if they looked up to those Deities, for that protection and assistance which they should expect only from Him, the Creator of every thing.

The additional reason for the celebration of the sacred day, viz., *the deliverance from the fetters of Egyptian bondage*—the prohibition, as to doing any sort of work, extended to the *strangers within the gates of his people*, in order that the Israelites might not be tempted, prone as they were to fall into idolatry, to have, if unrestrained, a dangerous intercourse with those *strangers* who might live with them—The *injunction* that all members of families, slaves of both sexes, and even the cattle, should share the *rest* prescribed; all these prove to demonstration, that the *fourth commandment* is *entirely ceremonial.*

First objection.

Yet, it is true, that it may be said that the *Sabbath of the Sunday* having suceeded to the *Saturday's Sabbath,* the law respecting the sabbath seems not to have been abolished.

Answer.

It cannot surely be denied that there is a sort of resemblance between the *Jewish sabbath*, and the *Christian sabbath;* and even that the intention of the primitive Christian Church has been to make, by degrees, the one to succeed to the other in that which may be considered as *moral*, in the institution of the Jewish Sabbath. But, many and weighty are the reasons which ought to prevent *the two Sabbaths* from being confounded.

1st. The *observation* of the *Christian Sabbath* is not a *ceremony:* it is a ***duty***, as we shall soon show; and a *duty* which ought to be performed with this *twofold design;* the *one* to consecrate particularly to God's service, a day in the week: The other, to take, and to give relaxation from the labours of the preceding days.

2nd. We do not remark in the Gospel, nor in the Ecclesiastical History, any obligation to spend the Sunday in absolute idleness, which idleness was however one of the principal features of the Jewish sabbath. If we abstain from working on the Sunday, it is merely that we may not be deterred from those exercises of piety, and from the meditation of those holy and spiritual objects to which that day is dedicated.

3rd. The Sunday is the first day of the week, and not the *seventh* which was the *essential day*, for the Jewish Sabbath.

4th. The object of the observation of the *Lord's Day* is very different from the object of the celebration of the Jewish Sabbath. This last was destined to *commemorate the creation of the world*, and *the deliverance from Egypt*. The other is solemnized to preserve the memory of the *Resurrection of Christ*, as it was by that momentous event, that *He was declared the son of God with power**;—that His religion was proved to be true,—that His exaltation and reign began;—that we were made certain of his sacrifice having been accepted by God,† and thereby of the full expiation of our sins,‡ and of our resurrection, *at the latter day*; and that, in short *new heavens and a new earth have been created; and the former*, (comparatively speaking) *is not to be remembered nor come into mind.*

Second objection.

It is further said—That the great object of the Jewish Sabbath being to *perpetuate* as well

* Rom. i. 4.

† 1 Cor. xv. 17. 22. 1 Thess. iv. 14.

‡ Isaiah lxv. 17.

as to celebrate the memory of the creation of the world, it seems natural enough that it should extend to all nations, and to all ages.

The answer to this *second objection* is this:— What we have already remarked, namely, the *silence* of the Scripture, on the *observation of the Sabbath*, during two thousand five hundred years, greatly counterbalances, (to say the least of it) that *specious* objection. Besides, a wise lawgiver does not, in general, enact laws, but in cases of urgent necessity, and when circumstances require those laws. Now, that precaution against idolatry as mentioned in the fourth commandment, was certainly much less needful, when the remembrance of the creation was still fresh, and recent, and could be kept up during several centuries, by the longevity of the Patriarchs who had almost been witnesses of the event; and could transmit it, by oral traditions to their descendants. But it was no longer the case, when that event being obliterated from the memory of men, they begun to worship idols: and if God thought fit to leave the other nations, *in the hand of their own counsel*, there was nothing more worthy his wisdom and goodness, than to guard his people against adoring false Deities by the institution of the Sabbath, and the bringing to their remembrance, their coming out of Egypt.

Third objection.

The words of *Genesis*, which recite *that God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because in it He had rested from all his works;** and those too of *Exodus*† in which *God's rest* is formally alleged as the reason of the institution of the Sabbath, seem to prove likewise, that that law does not regard the Jewish nation more than others.

That objection does not present more difficulty to be answered than the two former ones.

It is certainly said in *Genesis* that *God blessed*, that is, that He declared *good and right*, the Sabbath-day; and that He *sanctified it*, or distinguished it from the other days: but there is *no command* to celebrate it: it would be extraordinary, indeed, that the sacred historian should have preserved the memory of the Ordinance which God gave particularly to Adam; and that He should not have mentioned an Ordinance which regarded all mankind. When God punished men, by the flood, we do not find, among the crimes which they were upbraided with, that of the *violation of* the Sabbath; which however would have been a crime of the blackest die against God, if the command had been given.

* Gen. ii. 3. † Exod. xx. 11.

That *blessing*, or *consecration* of the seventh day *immediately* after the creation of the world, and in the pristine innocence of man cannot therefore have been of the same nature, as the *consecration* which was made of it, two thousand five hundred years after, on the Mount of Sinai: that *first consecration* did not enjoin on Adam, or his descendants, the performance of any particular duty, but served only to recall more on that day than on any other day of the week, the remembrance of the Creation, as a simple act of piety and gratitude to God, without any of those external formalities which were afterwards added, such as religious publick convocations, the nature of the festival, the cessation of all manual work, and other ceremonies: for which reason, some memorials of the seventh day are, it is true, to be found in the Scripture, as, for instance, in the History of the Flood; in that of the Patriarch Jacob, and especially in the sixteenth chapter of the Exodus, where, on relating an event which preceded, by some weeks, the publication of the Decalogue; namely, the miraculous feeding of the Israelites, in the wilderness, with manna, the seventh day is mentioned *as a day of rest*, the *rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord*. But we nowhere find any act or word, which

indicates, or even gives room to the conjecture, that the most pious patriarchs, either before, or after the flood, as *Henoch*, *Noah*, *Sem*, *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* ever kept the seventh day as a *festival*, or a day of religious assembly as the Israelites did, after the law of Sinai was proclaimed.

It is then extremely probable, that in *Genesis ii*, the sacred Historian (who agreeably to the opinion of the most learned commentators) wrote it as well as the four following books, only when He led the people of God from Egypt into Canaan, spoke there by *anticipation* of the sanctification of the day of rest in the same manner, as almost all the other Historians have done. Several other instances of such an anticipation are found in the Pentateuch. The History of the Creation itself appears to have been written, not till after the return from Egypt, with the view of deterring the Israelites, from the worship of false divinities: then, Moses teaches them, that it is for that purpose, that God *sanctified the* seventh day, and instituted that festival, in order that they should henceforth celebrate it with proper solemnity, every week.—On that ground the *sanctification of the seventh day* relates, not to the creation of the world, where that event is mentioned, but to subsequent times.

Fourth objection.

Another reason which may create a doubt, that the Sabbath is a *mere ceremony* is, that the law which commands it making a part of the decalogue in which *moral laws* which are of eternal obligation are contained, it seems to be of the same nature.

In answer to this last difficulty, we repeat, that the law of the Sabbath has all the characters of a ceremony, and not of a *moral duty;* and that the most eminent amongst the ancient fathers have entertained that opinion. *Pagans* also* have respected all the other articles of the Mosaic Law, and have turned into ridicule, only that concerning the Sabbath, because they considered it, as a *vain ceremony;* ignorant as they were of the profound wisdom which had dictated its institution. It was notwithstanding necessary that the law of the Sabbath although *entirely ceremonial* should be included in the decalogue, for these two reasons. Ist. Because the observation of the Sabbath forming *then* a part of divine worship, and being a sort of *preservative* against Idolatry, as God was

* Senec. ap. Aug. de Civil. Cap. 6.—*Juven.* Satyr. 4.

acknowledged in it to be the Creator of the Universe, it was but right and proper to place that law in the first table of the decalogue, which contained the duties of the Israelites towards God. 2nd. Because the decalogue is not only the compendium of *moral law*, but also of the *ceremonial* law: Now, the Sabbath itself was a compendium of this latter. This is the sentiment of *Philo*:* "The fourth commandment said he, is nothing else but an epitome of all that which is commanded, concerning festivals, vows, sacrifices, and the religious worship, in general."

The foregoing remarks are then the *principal reasons* respecting the *origin* and the *nature* of the Jewish Sabbath: We leave it to the *impartial reader* to form his judgment on that point: and at any rate, we request, he would not pronounce on the subject of this discussion altogether, before he has attentively perused the whole work: For, whether the fourth commandment be *entirely ceremonial* or *not*, it is only a part of the *great question* we have to examine, namely: Is the *Christian Sabbath* to be celebrated as the *Jewish Sabbath* was; and, as the *Ultra Sabbatarians* would have it ce-

* Philo, de Decal. 591.

lebrated? But before we come to the consideration of that *important question*, we must enter into those particulars which gradually lead us to it. First then let us consider the *ceremonies of the Jewish Sabbath.*

In its common signification, the word Sabbath designates the seventh day of the week, although it has sometimes a much more extensive sense. It began, on the Friday evening, the preparatory time, at sun set, and concluded, the next day, at the same hour.

What was principally to be observed, on that day, was *rest* and the cessation of every servile work, either with respect to men, or with regard to animals.*

That *absolute rest* was an essential part of the solemnity of that day is proved by the reasons already alleged. But, it appears, by several passages of the New Testament, that sacred exercises, as the *reading of the law*, *prayers* and *blessings*, were also necessary for the sanctification of that day, although nothing of the kind be commanded by the law, nor in the whole Old Testament, except the holocaust of two lambs† which were added, on the Saturday, to the morning and evening sacrifices.

* Exod. xvi. 29, xxiii. 12. Jerem. xvii. 22. 27.

† Numb. xxviii. 3. 10.

Rest, on the contrary, is enjoined, with the utmost severity. Hence, in the style of the scripture, *To profane the Sabbath* is *to work*: To *sanctify* it is *to rest*.*

Reason alone however was sufficient to prompt the Israelites to think, that, as God had reserved to himself, that day, it was to be spent in holy meditations, and a *pious rest*, as *Philo* has expressly remarked it.†

Servile works, even the most necessary, were prohibited, under pain of death, as to *gather sticks*, *or manna*, to *bake bread*, to *kindle a fire*, to *sow* and *to reap*, and even to *pluck the ears of corn*, to transport any thing, from one place to another, to go farther than a distance of two thousand cubits, which the scripture calls a *Sabbath day's journey*.‡

The Jews had carried so far this scruple, on that subject, that they did not think it right to defend their own lives, on that day. They suffered very much for their superstition.§ Yet, there were several things about which it was permitted to be occupied on the Sabbath

* Exod. xxxi. 13.—xxxv. 2.

† Jos. Antig. 12. 18—14. 8.

‡ Numb. xv. 32. Exod. xxxi. 14.—xxxv. 3.—xvi. 23. 29. John v. 10. Act i. 12. Matth. xii. 1, 2.

§ 1 Maccab. ii. 41.

day: But these could not be considered, as *servile works:* of this class were circumcision, works of mercy, even towards animals, and a fortiori, towards men, as the Saviour made the Pharisees remark, when they cavilled at him for having cured a man on the Sabbath :* and, in general, every occupation, or employment which concerned divine worship, was lawful, on the Sabbath day, as to prepare that which was necessary for sacrifices, to immolate victims, &c. Hence that maxim of the Jews, "that there was no Sabbath, in the sanctuary."

Feasts, rejoicings were deemed also, as *rest, essential* to the Sabbath, according to *Philo, Josephus,* and the *Thalmudists.*† Yet, it does not appear that those rejoicings were of divine Institution: The law itself merely says, that that day was instituted, to *unbend* one's self from all occupations; to take *relaxation,* to *breathe,* as the *Septuaginta* version has translated, to *refresh nature,* as the Latin one renders it.

That custom, no doubt, might be innocent, if, limited to simple and pure recreations, and a reasonable cheerfulness, the Jews had not gone beyond the bounds of moderation, and sobriety,

* Matth. xii. 5. John vii. 22. Luke xiii. 15.—xiv. 5.

† The adherents to the Thalmud, or Book of the Jewish traditions.

after they had acquitted themselves of the religious worship peculiar to that day. Our Saviour, himself, did not scruple to be present, at a *feast*, on the Sabbath-day.* But it was hardly to be expected, from that coarse and sensual nation, that such a custom would not degenerate into an abuse: some symptoms of that abuse may, at least, be seen, in the prophet Isaiah,† when God promises rewards to those *who should not abuse the Sabbath-day, nor find their own pleasure, nor speak their own words.* Let it however be kept in mind, that certainly the day of the Sabbath was a *day of joy*, which was manifested, by repeatedly *sounding the trumpet;* making great illuminations; every one putting on his best garments; and preparing, on the eve, a quantity of dishes, in order to have, on the Sabbath-day, a more sumptuous feast than usual.

Having premised thus far, and shown that the *fourth commandment*, in itself, and in its prescribed *outward observances* is *entirely ceremonial;* that it concerns the Jews only; was temporary, in its obligation; and is not binding on Christians; my readers may perhaps start at the question which I am proceeding to ask: "Are not all civil and ceremonial enactments of the

* Luke xiv. 1. † Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

Mosaic law, are they not virtually repealed among Christians?" The answer to that question, supported by Scriptural testimony, will prove also, that the Jewish Sabbath is *merely ceremonial.*

1st. Does not St. Paul rank the Sabbath among those ceremonies which are not to be binding on Christians? *Let no man judge you in meat, or drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the sabbath-days, which are a shadow of things to come, while the body is of Christ. If ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to Ordinances, . . . touch not, taste not, handle not, which are all to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship and humility.**

Has not the prophet Ezekiel† also said of those *ceremonial ordinances, that they were not good,* that is, not intrinsically good, being accommodated only to the genius and wants of a rude nation?

Against these sacred testimonies in vain, will those words of Christ be brought forward—*Think not, that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill:*

* Coloss. ii. 14—23. † Ezek. xx. 25.

*for, verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one title shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.** We say, that it is *in vain* to quote those words. For what is their meaning?

1st. It is principally the *moral law* which is here alluded to, and particularly those two commandments of which Christ said, that on them *hang all the law and the prophets: thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and soul, and mind; and thy neighbour, as thyself.*† Now, instead of *destroying* that compendium of the law, and the prophets, our Saviour truly fulfilled them, by his instructions, or precepts, and by his own example.‡

2nd. Those words, if applied to the *ceremonial law* must be thus understood; that Christ, far from changing any thing in the law of Moses, that was *essential* to it, has fulfilled, in his own person, its types, and figures, and finished what that Lawgiver, and the other servants of God had begun; as an able architect follows only his own plan when He raises an edifice the foundation of which is already laid, and takes away the scaffoldings which had served to its

* Matth. v. 17, 18.

† Matt. xxiii. 39, 40.

‡ Rom. xiii. 8. 10. Jam. ii. 8. Galat. v. 14.

construction. Such is, in fact, the doctrine of St. Paul: *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemneth sin in the flesh.** *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*† *The law was our school master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified unto faith.*

3rdly. Those words of Christ may be also taken as an *indirect reproach* addressed to the Jewish doctors, and especially to the Pharisees who did corrupt, and *destroy* the sense of the law, by their artful and fallacious traditions, and glosses as is shown by him:‡ and comparing Himself with them; what He says, comes to this: "Do not imagine to find in me so weak, and remiss a teacher, and such so relax a morality: *One jot, or one title shall in no wise pass from all the law till all be fulfilled:* Nobody shall ever be dispensed from the performance of the duties prescribed by the law, such as those to which I am now going to direct your attention:§ and all its figures, and oracles which remain still to be fulfilled, shall be completely accom-

* Rom. viii. 3. † Rom. x. 4.

‡ Matth. xv. 3. 6.

§ Matth. xv. 21. to the end of the Chapter.

plished, as also all that I have taught and predicted."

After all, what better authority, to use the language of a respectable author,* can be here introduced, to prove, that all the *civil, and ceremonial enactments* of the Mosaic law, are, among Christians, virtually repealed, than the *seventh article of the Church of England*, the latter part of which is this:

"Although the law given from God, by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites do not bind Christian men; nor the civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth, yet, notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is freed from the obedience of the commandments which are called *moral*."

Now, which are the commandments which are called *moral?* All the commandments which are called *moral* are most fully confirmed, by *Christ*, and the *Apostolical writers*, in the *New Testament*. But, we are not aware of a *single passage*, of one precept there respecting the fourth commandment; or connected with it, in a direct, or indirect manner—many injunctions are made respecting *publick worship*, as we shall soon see.

* Uvedale Price, M. A. of Christ Church, Oxford. *A reform without reconstruction*, &c.

But, nothing is to be found relating to the observation of the *Christian festival*, or the *Lord's* day, in the manner which the modern Jews, or Ultra-sabbatarians would wish to have it celebrated. The first day of the week, or the Sunday is certainly mentioned in the New Testament, under the name of the *first day of the week, and the Lord's day.** And it appears from those passages, that it was a day distinguished from the others, and consecrated to pious exercises: but there is *no positive* command to celebrate it. Let us however go further than mere assertion: let us prove that all the commandments of the Decalogue, except the *fourth* have been confirmed, in the Gospel, by numerous precepts; "are therefore binding on Christian men, and ought to be received in any commonwealth;" such however is not the case as regards the observance of any sabbatical enactments imposed on Christians.

With respect to the *first*, and even the *second* commandment, although this last be partly *ceremonial*, Jesus Christ confirms them by these words† . . . . *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God; and Him only shalt thou serve.*‡ *St. Paul declares*

* Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Apocal. i. 10.

† Matth. iv. 18. ‡ 1 Cor. vi. 10.

*that idolaters shall not inherit the kingdom of Heaven.** St. John recommends to keep ourselves from idols.

On the third commandment, vide, (as there would be no end to transcribe the passages,) vide Matth. v. 33. 37. James v. 12, &c.

On the 5th. Matth. xv. 4, 5, 6. Ephes. vi. 1, 2, 3. Coloss. iii. 20, &c.

On the 6th. Gal. v. 19. 21. 1 John iii. 12. 15. Matth. xv. 19. Apoc. xxi. 8, &c.

On the 7th. Matth. xix. 9—v. 28. Mark x. 9. 19. Rom. xiii. 13, 14. 1 Cor. vi. 10. 18. Gal. v. 19. 21. Ephes. v. 5, 6. Coloss. iii. 5, 6. 1 Cor. v. 1, 11. Hebr. xiii. 4, &c.

On the 8th. Luke xix. 7, 8. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Eph. iv. 28. Tit. ii. 9, 10, &c.

On the 9th. Matth. xv. 19. Acts v. 1. 10. Jam. v. 12. Apoc. xxi. 8, 27 —xxii. 15, &c.

On the 10th. Matth. v. 28. Luke xii. 15. Gal. v. 17. Rom. xiii. 14. Colos. iii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 11. 1 John ii. 16. Rom. vii. 7, &c.

* 1 John v. 21.

St. Paul recalls those five last commandments, as particularly *moral*.*

It is in this manner, that the Gospel confirms every commandment, which is *moral*, in the Decalogue: but I ask again where can we find, in the Gospel, a *passage* which confirms the *fourth commandment?* And why is not the *fourth commandment*, confirmed? Because it is *wholly ceremonial;* because it concerns the Jews only: Nay: far from being confirmed, we have seen what remarks Christ has made on the Sabbath: and his admirable, unanswerable words cannot be too often repeated, and impressed on the human mind: *The Sabbath was made for man; and not man for the Sabbath.*† All that we have hitherto said is only the developement of that forcible argument which cannot be *wrested* from its true meaning, by all the sophists of the deluded men of our days; for the observation of the Sabbath enjoined by them is, to all intents and purposes, as contrary to common sense, reason, humanity, and true religion, as it is to their own views which are defeated by their own enthusiasm and impracticable enactments: *impracticable enactments*, as we could prove, were it not beneath our present

* Rom. xiii. 8, 9. † Mark ii. 27.

purpose to bring such instances, in this serious discussion: we do not say, that the intention of those Ultra-sabbatarians is not good: but that their acts are far from producing good—we do not say, that their *zeal* is not sincere; *but that it is without knowledge.** We do not say, that they aim not at *being wise;* but, we say *that their wisdom descendeth not from above: for wisdom that is from above is first pure; then peaceable, gentle, full of mercy, and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*†

On the other hand, what are we to conclude from the foregoing remarks? Is it, that we are to have no Sabbath, no day peculiarly consecrated to the Creator, and Redeemer of the world? No: let not those who, from indifference, or any other equally *unwarrantable sentiment*, neglect the observation of the Christian Sabbath here triumph and exult. Between them, and the Ultra-sabbatarians, or modern Jews whom we have begun to expose, there is a just *medium* to be observed. The *principal reason* on which was founded the institution of the Jewish Sabbath, does not regard us less than the ancient people; I mean, that reason which is drawn from the *importance* and *absolute necessity* of publick worship—we ought

* Rom. x. 2. † James iii. 17.

to retain of the law of the Sabbath, its *spirit*, its *essence*, which is absolutely *moral*; its *great end* which is to deter us, . . . no longer it is true from that absurd worship which prostrated its followers before *wood* and *stone*, but from *another sort of idolatry*, as criminal, in its nature, and as dangerous, in its consequences, as was the ancient heathen idolatry; . . . namely, that which consists in showing to created beings those sentiments of respect, love, trust, and devotedness which are only due to the Creator: and this brings me therefore to our SECOND POINT.

SECOND PART.

THE EXTREME IMPORTANCE AND ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF DIVINE WORSHIP, IN GENERAL, AND PUBLICK WORSHIP, IN PARTICULAR.

1st. *The necessity of divine worship, in general*— That necessity is a natural consequence of our duties to God; a natural corollary of the conviction of its existence.

Indeed, as we show to our fellow-creatures, by our words and actions, the sentiments of respect and affection we entertain towards them, So, if we are penetrated with veneration for the

Supreme Being, his greatness and power, is it not just and reasonable, that we should set forth his most worthy praise, and become acquainted with his will, by listening to the lessons which he conveys to us, by his holy word? If we feel impressed with gratitude for the great benefits that we receive, daily, at his hands, through his providence, and grace, should it not be our delight to celebrate his goodness, and to render Him our most hearty thanks?—If we are deeply convinced of our absolute dependance on Him; and that we cannot find any happiness, but in the assurance of his love, and in the possession of his blessing, should we not readily promise Him seriously to endeavour to conform our lives to His commandments? Should we not deplore, at his feet, our numerous trangressions? Should we not entreat His forgiveness, and assistance not to fall voluntarily into sin? In a word, elated with joy, that a God so glorious and so great should allow us, miserable creatures, such a valuable privilege, as to worship Him, though the homage which we pay to Him can add nothing to the glory and beatitude he essentially enjoys, from all eternity, should we not avail ourselves of that privilege? *and from the abundance of our heart, should not our mouth speak?**

* Luke vi. 15.

2d. *Divine worship* is one of the best means to increase and nourish piety.

For, in fact, in what does that piety consist? Is it not in having sound and true notions of the Deity, and in being filled with those sentiments of reverence, filial fear, and submission which are due to Him? But, if we consider the *nature* of the different acts which constitute religious worship, and the *effects* which ought to result from it, we must acknowledge that each of those acts absolutely tends to awaken and strengthen those sentiments in our hearts.

To those reasons which establish the *necessity of divine worship in* GENERAL, let us add those which PARTICULARLY show *the high importance of publick worship.*

We may remark in the *first place,* that prone as we are to imitation, and to be led to good or evil by the example of each other; *publick worship* is *very efficacious,* for our mutual edification, and for keeping up in the minds of men, those profound sentiments of piety and righteousness, which are the basis of the happiness of a nation; which tend to *exalt it,** and prompt its members to obey the magistrate; and the magistrate to administer righteously the law: *Let your light*

* Prov. xiv. 34.

shine before men, says the Saviour, *that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**—*Let us consider one another to provoke us to love, and to good works.*†

2dly. By *public worship*, uniformity of faith is generally maintained. For, if there were no common creed, an infinite variety of opinions and religious practices would soon be introduced; and that variety of opinions and religious practices would not fail to create and keep up faction, both in Church and State: Has not experience proved this?

Publick worship maintains also that *spirit of fraternity* which is the essence of religion. Men often assembled in common worship are continually reminded, that, in the eyes of God, they are all equal, all sinners, all looking for mercy, all hoping for the same future happiness, and thereby become more united, and show greater sympathies for each other's wants and frailties; and if it be true, as experience also proves, that the bond of union between all citizens cannot be too closely knit, is it not for this reason that the great lawgivers have always considered reli- assemblies as an excellent mode of renderi- more social? But what can be better cal-

* Matth. v. 16. † Hebr. x. 24.

to obtain that desirable end, than that *charity* which the Apostle calls the *bond of perfection*,* and which all the parts of the Christian worship contribute to promote.

3dly. Another advantage of *publick worship* is this: That every thing which constitutes it, prayers, instructions, blessings being performed by persons properly called and qualified, for those august functions, is, on that very account, celebrated, with more authority, decorum, and order, and is, for the generality of men, an excellent preservative against the seductions of error, prejudice, and passion, as also against the illusions of enthusiasm and fanaticism.

4thly. Considering the disposition and inclinations of men, their temper, and course of life; considering likewise how many persons are ill educated, or absorbed in their pleasures, or in their affairs, and who consequently neglect almost entirely both *domestic worship*, and the *inward* worship of the heart, there is every reason to believe, that, if *publick worship* were ever to be abolished; Churches shut up; and Ministers driven from the altars, the ideas and sentiments of religion which are the greatest supports of good governments and good morals, (inasmuch as

* Coloss. iii. 14.

they repress those vices, which, although fatal to society, are not amenable to human tribunals,) would, by degrees, be soon enfeebled, or even absolutely extinguished. This is not a gratuitous or rash supposition: It is unfortunately what experience has fully demonstrated: And for the particular proof, there is no need to search for it in antiquity, or among nations very remote from us: it is to be found in our own times, and in a neighbouring continental nation.

Let us indeed think of that *too memorable epoch* when Christianity was, by authority, proscribed in that nation—that *too memorable epoch*, when France suddenly found herself without Sabbath, temple, ministers, or publick worship—that *too memorable epoch*, when the volcano of impiety discharged its foul lava over her magnificent cities and fertile plains—Is it not when irreligion was triumphant; when it was not only said, in speaking of Christ* . . . *We will not have Him to reign over us;* but when all that tended to recall, to the mind, His name, His memory, and the trace of the very day particularly consecrated to his service, was obliterated, is it not then that innumerable evils oppressed and crushed that nation? Is it not then, that we saw at once

* Luke xix. 14.

virtues disappear, vice flourish, and crimes committed with impunity; and the finest kingdom of the universe, till then celebrated for its civilization, and the urbanity of manners of its inhabitants, present the hideous spectacle of such nefarious deeds, that they have brought to our recollection, all the *facts* which the annals of paganism relate of the proscriptions of ancient Rome; of the blood shed under a Marius, a Scylla, a Nero, a Caligula, an Heliogabalus: *Facts* which however authenticated by the most unexceptionable testimony,... the innate feelings of humanity implanted in the human mind would almost induce us to reject, ... if the horrors perpetrated in the country alluded to, and which till then were unparalleled, and which unfortunately do not admit of doubt, did not entitle the heathen writers to implicit credence.

It is then our duty to give an attentive ear to those terrible lessons which Providence has written for our instruction, in characters of blood, over all the surface of the vast country of which we are speaking, to teach us *what man is;* of what monstrous atrocities he is capable, when he has once arrived at such a pitch of wickedness as to break down the barrier of religion, and to extinguish, *with the dust* of its ruins, the light of conscience itself.

Lastly—Let us open the *Word of God*—How urgent and numerous are its *exhortations to publick worship!*

Without recapitulating them, (which would be an endless undertaking,) without insisting on the institution of *baptism* which marks our entrance into the Church of Christ who has established it,—nor on that of the *Lord's Supper*, which is a command He has laid on His Disciples often to meet together to commemorate His death, by which we are saved—Without bringing forward the *example of those holy men* whom the Scripture praises for their regular practice of the duty in question, and particularly that of *David* who made public worship his delight; who so beautifully professed his joy for the Church, and prayed for the peace thereof;* who, when absent from it, did long for the communion of the sanctuary, exclaiming, in his holy raptures . . . *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts; My soul fainteth for the courts of the Lord: Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: For, a day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.*† Without, I say, insisting on those

* Ps. 122.

† Ps. lxxxiv. 92. 100. 103. 104, 105. 117, &c. Ephes. v. 19, 20. Heb. xv.

observations, let us satisfy ourselves by remarking, that our Lord would not allow so important a support of society and good morals, as *publick worship*, to be neglected—That, not contented with withdrawing himself to prayer in private, He used assiduously to frequent the Temple of Jerusalem, and the Jewish Synagogues—That He has made that solemn declaration, that gracious promise . . . *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.** That, after His example and precepts, the Apostles, as soon as the number of Christians sufficiently increased for them to meet together, formed public assemblies—That, it is said of those who believed, *that they were assembled together*,† and continued, with one accord, in the Temple, in prayer and supplication—That, *on the first day of the week, when the Disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them*‡—That the very name of *Church*, which means *an assembly of the people*, supposes *publick worship*—That the Apostles addressed their Epistles to several Churches, that is to say, to the congregations of Christians of such and such a place—That the care which they took to

* Matth. xviii. 20. † Acts i. 15. ii. 46.
‡ Acts xx. 7.

establish Pastors in every Church, and the functions of those Pastors, show, that the Christians met together at different times— That St. Paul* speaks of those assemblies, and reproves those who *did forsake them*, from the fear of the persecutions excited against them— That, at first, they had their private meetings, in the Jewish Synagogues, on some particular days; and that, when they were expelled from those Synagogues, and had increased considerably in number, and enjoyed *more* liberty to declare freely their faith in Jesus, they built temples to the honour of the living God.

There is then a *publicity of worship*, established, under the *new*, as under the *ancient law*. As *men*, as *citizens*, as *Christians*, we owe to God a *publick worship*: No question can be entertained on that point... no more than on the very existence of the Deity: It is an incontestable and incontested truth. But, in order to have a *regular publick worship*, a *particular day must be set apart*. A few words will suffice on this THIRD POINT.

* 1 Cor. xi. 17. Heb. x. 25.

THIRD POINT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A DAY SET APART WITH RESPECT TO THE CELEBRATION OF PUBLIC WORSHIP, AND THE PROPRIETY OF THAT DAY BEING FIXED ON SUNDAY.

The reason for having a day set apart for *publick worship* is indeed plain and obvious. For, if no particular day were fixed on, but every one left to himself to choose what day he pleased, to consecrate to God, not only we should not know how to act, in that respect; but the general intercourse of human affairs would be subject to continual interruption; and *publick worship* would, in fact, cease to exist. It would certainly be very desirable, that some part of each day should be set apart for that sacred object. On that footing was divine service established among the Jews, in the time of our Saviour: and the same practice is still observed, in several Christian churches. But, as the occupations of the generality of men are not compatible with the daily frequenting holy assemblies, and even render it

impossible for them to attend them, it was *indispensable* to fix on a certain day which should be specially destined to render, with one accord, to the Supreme Being, the homage and service that are due to Him.

Now, what *more appropriate day* could be fixed upon, for that *regular publick worship*, than the one set apart by the *Apostles*, viz., the *Sunday*, or the *first day of the week*, . . . not as a substitution for the *seventh day*, or the *Jewish Sabbath*, but as the *fittest* day to commemorate, in perpetuity, the most important event to Christians, namely, as it has been already said, the *resurrection of the Divine Founder of their religion*; which resurrection took place, on that day.

The *Sunday-festival* is therefore absolutely a Christian and *Apostolical Institution:* and although no *express command* has been given, as to its *observance*, by the Apostles; and it cannot be assimilated, in point of supreme and *direct* authority, with the institution of the *Jewish Sabbath*, nor with the institution of *baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*, the practice of which has been urgently enforced by *positive* and *repeated ordinances*, yet, as the Apostles, who were *inspired by the spirit of God*, have left that example of *hallowing the first day of the week*, by their *assembling on that day, with the disciples, of*

one accord, in the temple, and applying themselves to prayer, preaching, breaking bread, &c. and as that example so worthy to be followed, and attended with so many Divine blessings, has been constantly followed from their time, to our own days, and has become the universal practice of the Christian Church, in every Christian country, whether Protestant, or Roman Catholic; the *Sunday*, or Christian Sabbath, ought, in that point of view to be considered, and has, in fact, been always considered, as being also of *Divine*, and not merely *Ecclesiastical* institution, as some commentators have asserted. Hence, in every language, the word which expresses it has the same signification: in English, the *Lord's Day:* in Italy, it is called, not *Sabato*, but *Dominica* as in Latin, *Dies Domini;* and in French, *Dimanche:* and it is mentioned in the *New Testament* under the name of the *first day in the week*, and the *Lord's Day.**

It was *first*, at Antioch,† that the disciples were called Christians, from their chief . . . *Christ.* Before that time, they had merely the name of *Disciples—Disciples of the Lord—Brothers.*‡

* Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Apoc. i. 10.

† Acts xi. 26. ‡ Acts vi. 1.—ix. 1. 30.

The *first Christian Society*, which was formed at Jerusalem, was called *Church*, i. e. an assembly of the people; and is thus described by St. Luke.* *The multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one soul: they had all things common; and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need, so that there was no one that lacked: they were daily in the temple, continuing with one accord, and stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers: they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart; praising God, and having favour with all the people: a great grace was upon them all; and the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.*

Different then in its *origin* from the Levitical Sabbath, the *Christian Sabbath*, is yet also of *Divine origin*, since the Apostles instituted it; since God approved the institution, by the *great grace* which He gave them; and by the *blessings* with which He acccompanied it.

Different also is the *Christian worship*, from the other, at least, in several respects. The *Levitical worship* consisted principally in *bloody sacrifices*, and in several sorts of *material offerings*. The *Christian offerings* are very different: we offer, to

* Acts i. 41. 47—iv. 33. 35.

God, *prayers and thanksgivings* which St. Paul calls *the fruit of our lips.** We offer *alms* which the same Apostle calls a *sacrifice with which God is well pleased*—† Again, we offer the sacrifice of our own persons, and passions to God, agreeably to this injunction: *I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*‡

Another difference between the *Levitical worship*, and that of the *Christians* is, that the Judaic worship could be celebrated only where the tabernacle was; while ours is limited to no place, and may be solemnized, in all the countries of the world, according to our Saviour's saying to the *woman of Samaria: Woman! believe me: the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father: but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the father, in spirit, and in truth: for, the father seekest such to worship Him.*§

Different in its *origin*, and *nature* from the Jewish service, the Christian worship is also different from it, in its *object*. That *object* is indeed the *true living God*, as in the worship es-

* Hebr. xiii. 15. † Heb. xiii. 16.
‡ Rom. xii, 1. § John iv. 21. 23.

blished by Moses. But all its parts are celebrated, in the *name of Christ*. Thanksgivings, petitions, prayers, instructions, ceremonies, every thing is performed in the *name of Christ*: The whole worship is presented to God, by *Christ*, that it may go *up to the throne of the Almighty, as an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to Him, for the sake of his beloved Son, who humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**

Moreover, the *very form* of the Christian Service is different from that of the ancient people. We have none of their *ceremonies* or *ostentatious observances*. The Evangelical Economy, less rigid and strict than that of Moses, does not bind us to the same *servile obedience* with regard to outward worship: But having only in view what is *essential* and *important*, it merely sets down the *great principle*, viz., the *indispensable duty of adoring God*, through Christ, and leaves, to every country, nation, or church, to make such regulations as they think fit and proper, respecting the *external* or *accessory* parts of that worship.

I say, the *external or accessory parts* only. For that sort of *religious police* which every commu-

* Acts x. 4. Philip. iv. 18. Phil. ii. 8.

nity has an undoubted right to determine, agreeably to their prudence, discretion, times, places, and circumstances, ought never to deviate from the *fundamental rules* which are derived from the very essence of that worship. To express ourselves still more explicitly, what we mean is this: That the *Christian publick worship* ought always to correspond with the *spiritual nature*, the majesty, and the holiness of the Supreme Being, who is the object of that worship: That all things ought *to be done unto edifying, decently, and in order**—That we ought always retain the sound doctrine of the primitive Church, and imitate its piety and moral practice; and never impose upon people, a *yoke* which would deter them from coming to Christ; a *yoke*, which, under the pretence or shadow of devotion, would favour hypocrisy, superstition, licentiousness, and neglect of *publick worship*; a *yoke*, in short, totally different from that of *Christ*, which is *easy; and whose burden is light*.†

But, however different the *Christian Sabbath* and the *Christian publick worship* are from the *Jewish Sabbath* and the *Levitical worship*, there are *two things* which ought absolutely to be retained from the law of the Jewish Sabbath, in the

* 1 Cor. xiv. 25. 40. † Matt. xi. 30.

observance of the Lord's Day. For no one denies, or can deny, that the Lord's Day must also be *kept holy:* But the question between the *Ultra-sabbatarians* and those Christians who merely adhere to the *holy Scripture,* as the rule of faith and conduct, is this—What is it *to keep holy the Lord's Day?* In what does its celebration consist? And this is the *fourth part, or object,* to be considered.

FOURTH PART.

WHAT CELEBRATION DOES THE CHRISTIAN FESTIVAL OF SUNDAY REQUIRE? OR, HOW IS THE LORD'S DAY TO BE SOLEMNIZED, OR KEPT HOLY?

Those two things which we say ought absolutely to be retained of the law of the Judaical Sabbath, in *the observance of the Lord's Day,* are these.

In the *first place, . . . What ought not be done, on the Lord's Day?*

In the *second place . . . What ought to be done on that day?*

1st. *What ought not to be done?* Or, what must we abstain from?

1st. We must abstain from all *unnecessary work*. This cessation of work, or the *rest* to be observed, does not however exclude *works of charity*, which our Saviour has fully shown by his example, as not only *lawful*, but part of the sanctification of the Sabbath. It neither excludes works of *absolute necessity*, or *urgency*; which cannot be delayed to another time, or which are imperiously called by circumstances, as, for example, when some impending danger is to be warded, or some misfortune prevented or remedied; when persons are reduced to that extremity of distress and misery, that they cannot relieve themselves otherwise, than by consecrating, to domestic labour, the early part of that holy day. To the Saviour again we appeal on that score: *Does not each one of you*, has he said to the Jews, *loose his ox, or his ass, from the stall, and lead him away to watering?** Or, *if it has fallen into a pit, will ye not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath? How much then is a man better than a sheep?*—And also, when His Disciples were an hungred, (and this we say with respect to the extreme want of food among the poor people,) and the Pharisees blamed him for suffering his Disciples *to pluck the ears of corn, to*

* Luke xiii. 15. xiv. 5. Matth. xii. 1, 4. 12.

appease their hunger on a Sabbath-day, what did he answer to those Pharisees? . . . *Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred,—How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat*, &c.*

The *work* then which is condemnable, on the Lord's Day, is that which proceeds from *cupidity*; that which is merely a *worldly occupation* that can be put off to another day—that which would *prevent attendance of publick worship*, even on the part of the *poor*, whose wretched situation we have just mentioned.

2d. Besides the *cessation of all unnecessary work*, we must abstain from all pomp and *worldly acts*,

* It is much to be wished, that masters could be compelled to pay their journeymen or working people, any other day but on the *Saturday*, in order that the poor might have it in their power, to purchase, on that day, their provisions, and to greater advantage, than they can do on the Sunday morning.—If, however, such a law cannot be enacted, I submit whether one could not be framed, to permit shops where eatables of any kind are sold to be opened in summer till 9 o'clock on Sunday morning, and till 10 o'clock in winter? By such an enactment, neither the sellers nor the buyers would be hindered from *attending publick worship*, which is the great object of the *sanctification of the Lord's Day*.—And would not such an act be conceived in the spirit of our Saviour's sentiments and example respecting the Sabbath? For, is there any difference between what He permitted His Disciples to do, on a Sabbath-day, because they were *hungry* . . . and the poor making their *provision of food*, early on Sunday morning, to prevent their *starving*?

which have an appearance of impiety, and which would in any wise assimilate us to the Pagans who imagined, that they were by such a show, honouring Deities, who were subject to the passions, and weaknesses of humanity— Even *publick parties of pleasure* and gaiety, however irreprehensible they may be in their nature, become highly reprehensible when indulged on that day, which is to be a day of *rational rest*, and devotion.

I say, a *day of rational rest!*

It would be indeed a very wrong notion of the object of the Lord's day, to consider it merely as a day of pure *animal rest*, or *cessation of every servile work*, and of those *amusements* which are incompatible with its solemnity. That is only a part of our duty: The other, and *principal one* is to *consecrate that day to God*, to pious exercises, to holy works: In that consists its *religious purpose:* and in order to develope it, let us examine as briefly as possible.

2nd. WHAT IS TO BE DONE, ON THE LORD'S DAY?

Or, 1*st. What is proper to do, before we go to Church?*

2*nd. What is proper to do, when we are in Church?*

3*rd. What is proper to do, when out of Church?*

First: WHAT IS PROPER TO DO, BEFORE WE GO TO CHURCH? As the soil which is not prepared cannot bring forth much fruit, so the heart which is not opened to the impressions of Divine grace must necessarily be barren. In order then to prepare us suitably for the holy duty of the day, these three things are equally natural and easy to be put in practice.

1st. To *meditate* on the *many temporal and spiritual blessings* received from God, which ought to incite us *to glorify him, in our body and spirit which are God's**—or on our own *sinful state and unworthiness*, which prove how essential it is that we should implore his mercy, assistance, and protection.

2d. Humbly and earnestly to pray that our heart may be so softened and subdued, that we may offer it to Him, as *an acceptable sacrifice;* worship His holy name with fervour; hear meekly His word: and successfully entreat for His gracious blessing.

3d. To *read a part of the Scripture*, such as the first or second lesson of the day, with such a spirit of devotion, as to prepare ourselves to hear the explanation that may be given in the

* 1 Cor. vi. 20.

church, so as to be filled with such sentiments as are required of those who enter into God's sanctuary, which brings us to the *second part* of our duty, which we have thus expressed.

Secondly—What is proper to do when we are in the Church?

Or, *What are the dispositions of the mind and heart, which the celebration of publick worship demands?*

We reduce those dispositions to the three following.

1st. We must attend publick worship—*with pleasure.*

2dly. With *respect.*

3dly. With a serious desire to become *better* by it.

1st. Then, we must attend *publick worship* with *pleasure.*

It is not always Christian zeal and the care of their salvation that bring Christians to the house of God: Too many led thither merely by custom, idleness, curiosity, compulsion, attend not to the solemn duties of the sanctuary: Their eyes and their hearts are occupied in frivolous . . . too often in criminal thoughts and pursuits: And with them, the Sacred Word, as the prophet expresses it, is but as *a tinkling cymbal*, in their ears—What do I understand then when I say,

that we must attend publick worship *with pleasure?* I mean, that we must go there, from *inclination*, *gratitude*, and *love*. Every thing, indeed, which takes place in the Church, ought to make the Sabbath *our delight*, whatever our situation may be.

Are we in *prosperity?* How sweet, how pleasant, it is, if we have a due sense of benefits received, to hear the *loving kindness of the Lord*, who is the author of every good gift, celebrated! Are we in *adversity?* What solace in our troubles; what relief in our pains; what strength to bear our difficulties, do we not derive from those ideas which divine worship brings continually to our mind; and which tend to show that all the events of this transitory world are dispensed by the hand of a wise providence, and dispensed for our advantage! Are we heavily laden by the consciousness of our faults? Are we anxious to seal, in our heart, the hope of forgiveness? Every thing in the house of God, prayers, lectures, preaching, sacraments, blessings, every thing retraces to us, the *God of Love*;* the *God who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live*;† the *God* who *does not break the bruised reed, nor quenches*

* 2 John, iv. 8. † Ezek. xviii. 32.

the smoaking flax;* the *God*, in short, who *so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*† In the *natural depression* caused by our daily and multiplied relapses into sin, notwithstanding our many solemn promises, our noble resolutions, and virtuous desires, do we exclaim?—*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of corruption?*‡ who will help me to triumph over those *carnal lusts which war against my soul?* . . . Let us go to the foot of the altar, where our devotion being increased by the union of our brethren, we may implore Divine grace, with that *cry of the heart*, of which it is said that *God always hears it:* and our strength then renewed like that of the eagle, we will soon from experience, utter these words: *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.*§

2nd. If we so enter the House of God, *with pleasure*, we shall, when there, be filled, in the *second place*, with sentiments of *reverence*. For, what are temples, with regard to *God*; and what, with regard to *ourselves?*

With regard to *God*, they are the *throne of his*

* Matt. xii. 10. † John iii. 16.
‡ Rom. vii. 24. § Phil. iv. 13.

glory; the *theatre of his mercies, and the triumph of religion. Irreverence* is then the sin of revolt and ingratitude, inasmuch as it attacks at once, His greatness, and His goodness.

With regard *to us,* temples are *places of prayer* and *adoration:* It is there that our homage is offered to *God;* and it is there that we implore his favours. They are the image of Heaven, where His elect are assembled; where the Lord *converses,* (if I can make use of the expression) with them. Is not then *irreverence,* a sin against those whose devotion and peace it disturbs?— Hence those sacred injunctions: *keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God; and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools:* for they consider not that they do evil. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.† Reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.‡* Let your mind, by its thoughts; your heart, by its sentiments; your mouth, by its words; your eyes, by their humble looks; and all your body by its deportment, mark the respect due to the altar, and to Him who is above the altar: *surely the Lord is in this place: this is none other but the House of God, and the gate of Heaven.*§

* Eccles. v. 1. † Psal. xxix. 2. ‡ Levit. xix. 30.
§ Genesis xxviii. 16, 17.

Yet, to resort to the throne of grace, with eagerness, and joy; to put on a grave, solemn, and edifying countenance is not, after all, sufficient: it is the *heart* that ought to be offered to God: it is the *heart* that ought to dictate, or follow all the parts of the worship which we render to Him: it is the *heart* that ought to receive the holy word, in order to increase, through it, in faith and virtue; and therefore I add a *condition*, which is, . . . we must attend publick worship, with the *sincere desire to become the better for it.*

With that view, or intention, however *unpleasant* may be the different truths which are discussed, let us *well* say to ourselves, that we are in the House of God, to listen to what may be useful to our souls, and not to what may please our ears; and consequently let us apply to our *spiritual wants*, the apposite reflections which are presented to us, by Him who speaketh from God, before God, by the grace of God, and to bring us to God: thus are the blessings of the Lord pourtrayed to our eyes? Let us excite, in our heart, corresponding feelings of gratitude—are his threats and judgments denounced? Let us acknowledge, that we most righteously have deserved them: *O Lord! Righteousness belongs*

*unto thee: but unto us confusion of face**—Is it the turpitude of any particular vice that is exhibited to us? Let us imitate the disciples of Jesus, who *exceeding sorrowful, and looking at each other*, did not think to lay the reproach on their neighbour, when the Saviour announced to them, that one of them would betray Him; but begun, every one of them, to say unto Him . . . *Lord! Is it I?*†—Is the importance of *working our own salvation, with fear and trembling*‡ urged on our attention? Let us, pricked, in our heart, as the Jews when they heard the discourse of St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said to Him, and to the rest of the Apostles . . . *Men, and brethren! What shall we do?*§—In short, let the *word of God, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, be piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints, and marrow.*‖ Let it enlighten our understanding; purify our affections; curb our will; comfort our hearts, sanctify and save our souls—To facilitate the production of those salutary effects, we come to examine *in the third and last place.*

* Dan. ix. 7. † Matt. xxvi. 22. ‡ Phil. ii. 12.
§ Acts. ii. 37. ‖ Heb. iv. 12.

What is proper to do, when out of the Church, for the sanctification, or hallowing the Lord's day?

On that *article* we will content ourselves, with quoting two words from the gospel.

The *first* is from St. Paul. *We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time, we should let them slip.** One, indeed, of the great causes of the little improvement we make in piety; of the little fruit we reap from religious asemblies, is, that we do not give, to the holy word the time necessary to take root in our heart: The reason is, that after we have heard it, we too soon return to the world, and its follies: that we occupy our minds before we go home; often perhaps before we quit the sanctuary, with things that are diametrically contrary to those which have just engaged our attention; instead of remembering, and treasuring up, in a becoming manner, the sacred truths which have been explained to us; instead of crowning our publick exercises of devotion by domestic worship, pious conversations and readings, and *all that which is good to the edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*†

The second *word*, or counsel of the gospel, is that of *Jesus Christ* who Himself put it in prac-

* Heb. ii. 1. † Ephes. iv. 29.

tice, for our instruction. It is by *holy works* that *holy days are hallowed.* And how many of those works with which *God is delighted,* present themselves continually before us! How many people are there lingering in a bed of sickness, and thereby deprived of the privilege of publick worship, to whom we might impart the instructions we have received! How many who are an *hungred* and *thirsty,* and *naked,* to whom we might give meat, and drink, and clothes!* How many that mourn whom we might comfort! How many fatherless children, and widows, whom we might solace and befriend! How many, in the hour of death, whose faith, hope and resignation, might, by our zeal, be reanimated, and strengthened so as to prompt them to *commit the keeping of their soul to Him who is a faithful Creator,* and through the merits of Jesus Christ!†

Now, if the performance of those duties which we have traced out—If the *cessation of every unnecessary labour,* and of *worldly pleasures*—If the *religious consecration* of the Christian Sabbath, to God, by *publick worship* so solemnly observed, that it should comprehend,—what *ought to be done before we come to Church; what*

* Matth. xxv. 34. 36.—v. 4. † 1 Pet. iv. 19.

ought to be done in the Church itself, and, *what ought to be done, when out of Church*, namely, family worship, and the *going from place to place, in doing good*—If attending to all those things and to the *particulars* which each of them comprehends, in a true spirit of devotion and genuine piety is not *hallowing the Lord's Day* . . . then, I do not hesitate to declare that the knowledge of the Scripture is vain—that it ought no longer to be our rule.

But, if what we have stated is the *truth*, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—then it must one day prevail: for truth is indeed as eternal as the Deity — Himself — Men may neglect it for a time, and a long time: but the moment must come when the will of Providence will be accomplished—when the rays of truth must pierce through the mists of prejudice, and diffuse over the human race a beneficent light which nothing hereafter can obscure.

Ultra-sabbatarians! Hasten that happy moment, I conjure you: If the truth of the foregoing remarks be established beyond power of contradiction or refutation, have then the candour to acknowledge, that your opinion, respecting the Sabbath, is erroneous; and have honesty enough to relinquish it.

If, however, anybody be surprised that we

have been so explicit in describing the *manner* in which the *Sabbath* is to be observed, were now to put this question to us: Is every *rational pleasure*, every quiet and innocent domestick recreation, . . . *unlawful*, after one has strictly spent the Lord's Day, in the manner aforesaid, we will fearlessly and candidly give this answer—That, as we find nothing in the Gospel which authorises us to decide that question, *with a degree of severity* worthy only of a Jesuit; if we were to do so, it would be going beyond the prescribed limits of our sacred ministry: It would be keeping men from Christ, instead of bringing them to Him, *who is the way, the truth, and the life*:* it would be creating disgust against a religion which is the friend of man, and his only solace in the midst of the troubles and miseries of this world. We cannot, indeed, be constantly engaged in prayer, deep meditation, and serious reading: it is impossible for the human soul, while it is united with the body, to be always soaring in the ethereal regions; or to be constantly employed in the contemplation of spiritual objects: Moreover, it would be repugnant to the goodness, and even the justice of God, to require from us such an

* John xiv. 6.

exaltation of piety as He has not made us susceptible of: pure and perfect piety does not belong to this world, where we are placed only to fit us for those sublime sentiments which distinguish the celestial hierarchy: holiness is to be attained only in Heaven: the practice of a more humble piety is our task here below.

Besides, it must not be forgot, that even under the *Mosaic Law*, however rigid it was, the Sabbath, far from being a day wholly consecrated to devotion, was also a day, in which it was usual for the Israelites to testify, to the Supreme Being, their feelings of gratitude, for the benefits received at his hand . . . by those innocent demonstrations of joy, which a sound and well understood religion never condemned — God forbid, then, that under the *new law*, which is much less ceremonial than that of the Hebrew legislator, we should interdict to Christian liberty, or rather to human weakness, something of a similar nature: but, what we must very particularly remark, is, that our recreations, whenever we take any, should never *precede* the duties of the day, nor *interfere* with its principal object, namely, *publick worship*; or be *injurious* to the edifying of our neighbour, or to the fruits of our devotion.

Let me then, before I proceed further, let me

ask again those who are deluded respecting the *observation of the Sabbath*, to say, whether a more holy or becoming observation of the Lord's Day can be enjoined, than that which has been now developed and explained? Would to God only that their principles, sentiments, and deeds, were more in conformity with those rules of duty we have shown to be purely evangelical; instead of slandering, as too many do, those whose conduct and example they have not the virtue nor courage to imitate.

If those *Ultra-sabbatarians* confess to themselves, that what has been said, in the foregoing pages, is true—that greater ignorance has never existed on any subject, than that displayed on *their observation of the Lord's Day*, . . . what will they say presently, when they see that we go still much beyond their religious code, not indeed in the same way, but in what is *most material and important* to observe on the subject, and the justice and truth of which cannot be denied.

We have just mentioned, that we ought not, in the *observance of the Lord's Day*, allow ourselves to do any thing that might prove *injurious* to the *fruit of our devotion:* But what must that fruit be?—Amendment; virtue. It is with this *most important* reflection, that we shall conclude.

We think it manifest, from the whole tenor of

our *liturgical service*, and our duty as prescribed in the Gospel, that to limit the practice of religion, to the *observation of the Lord's Day:* and the *observation of the Lord's Day*, to the *hallowing of that day alone*, is doing very little... unless it be carried into all the *other days of the week;* unless it has an influence on the whole of our conduct, in every station of life, in every relation we maintain, in society; unless it make us better masters and servants, better husbands and wives, better fathers, mothers, and children, better friends, and better citizens;*

* We have heard it often remarked, and alleged as a cause of the little moral improvement of people... "the neglect of ministers to preach, develope and urge *those relative moral duties;* and their presenting to their hearers, only such general reflections, as from their lax and vague nature, do not come home to the hearts." How far that remark is just and correct, we do not pretend to say, as we have no opportunity of forming a judgment. We will then merely observe, that, although the *doctrinal part* of religion be highly important to be propounded as being the *basis* of the *true Christian morality*, yet it is much to be apprehended, that if produced over and over again, this cannot be done, without diminishing that interest and attention which the awfully grand and solemn *dogmas* ought to keep awake, if seasonably treated; and without leaving behind the exposition of those *duties*, the practice of which is so essential to the moral progress of society, in general, and the spiritual welfare of families, in particular. *Christian festivities*, and other like circumstances naturally lead to the consideration of the first momentous truths which

in short, more just, temperate, and charitable; more peaceable, less anxious for worldly gain, and more solicitous about things which relate to our future happiness. This is the literal explanation of *our* Ultra-sabbatarianism.

Some of the other *Ultra-sabbatarians* have advanced, in different pamphlets, that the principal cause of the *publick calamities*, is the *non-observance of the Sabbath*. Fortified, however, by holy writ, we will say to them: It is not so much the *non-observance of the Sabbath*, which produces the evils complained of, as it is the *observance of the Sabbath*... without *reformation*: —Without *reformation of manners*, all *religious observances*, or which have the appearance of religion, are absolutely nothing: They are a

would then have a greater effect on the mind and heart of the congregations, than if loosely propounded every Sunday—or, what seems to us still a better plan, as embracing at the same time, an increase of *faith*, and *morality*, is a more frequent explanation of the whole, or part only either of the *epistle*, or of the *gospel* of the day, in which both, is always found such an abundant matter of *fundamental doctrine*, and of *moral duties*, united together as to afford instruction to the mind; improvement to the heart; and useful rules for our conduct in all the affairs, and transactions of life. —Read only the admirable sermon of our Saviour, on the Mount; and his declarations respecting the last judgment, (Matth. 25—) You will see that what we have just observed is founded on his example—and that He is to be the *model* of ministers in particular, as the *model* of Christians in general.

mockery of the Deity, unless accompanied with a daily moral improvement: Would it not be much better, not to observe the Lord's Day, than to observe it, without putting its doctrines into practice; without fulfilling its sacred engagements?

This is not, I repeat it, an idea of our own imagination: It is the positive language of the Scripture—*To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations: Incense is an abomination unto me: The new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting: Your appointed feasts my soul hateth: They are a trouble unto me: I am weary to bear them: And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood: wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow.** Hear also the Saviour himself: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord!*

* Isaiah i. 11. 16.

*shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my father which is in heaven.** *That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*† *If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: But now ye say; we see; therefore your sin remaineth.*‡ *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips: But their heart is far from me; but in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*§

Hear also the Apostle Peter: *It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them: But it is happened unto them, according to the true proverb: The dog is turned to his own vomit again: and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.*||

Every page, and almost every line of the Scripture tend to the same purpose, to declare that mere *external homage* and *observances* are *nothing*, without the sanctification of the heart.

* Matth. vii. 21. † Luke xii. 47. ‡ John ix. 41.
§ Matth. xv. 8, 9. Mark vii. 6, 7.
|| 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22.

But, how contrary is the general opinion of men, if we can judge of that opinion, by their conduct! In examining it, in all the different classes of society, we are fully convinced, that it is much less the *observation of the Sabbath* which ought to be urged, than the *observation of the moral and religious truths*—which the Sabbath was instituted to perpetuate and enforce: Public worship is a mean of sanctification, but not sanctification itself: one of its objects is to instruct us in our duty, with regard to *faith*, *temperance*, and *justice;* and what we owe to *God*, to our *neighbour*, to *ourselves:* But, it is not the practice of that *duty*, nor of those *virtues*.

In order to prove however that the generality of men really consider that, religion consists *principally*, if not solely, in the *external observances* of it, let us seriously look into their conduct, after they *have hallowed the Lord's Day*.

This picture of our manners may be unpleasant to the reader: yet, if it be unfortunately too faithful, let it come home to the heart: let him not deem the hand too bold that traces its features; nor enfeeble the rights of our ministry, in order to screen the fallaciousness of his security: but let him honour the truth.

Avarice is declared to be *an idolatry*.*

And what shall we say of that greedy appetite for gain, that mean spirit of self-interest which is the reigning sin, the prevailing character, the national vice? Is it not on that axis that all our activity of body and mind revolves? Is it not that passion which is the central point to which every idea, every design, every movement, every impulse of the generality of men in this country is directed? We do not mean to blame the performance of those duties to which they are absolutely called, by their stations in life, during the week: but what must be reprobated is that *immoderate* love of wealth, that unquenchable thirst for riches, which not only creates an excessive anxiety, incompatible with any serious thought; makes them forget the most sacred obligations; and prevents them from carrying the *religious* and *moral principles*, in their social affairs, and pleasures, but often does away too with every scruple about the means employed to obtain the end; prompts them to those perjuries, and base transactions which are contrary to decency and honour; to those fraudulent practices, those mysteries of iniquity, the very infamy of which

* Colos. iii. 5.

compels the true Christian to abandon them to the internal rebukes of their own conscience, if they can, any way, evade the pursuits of human law.

Is not that, we ask, an *idolatry*, as criminal, in its nature, and as fatal in its consequences, as was that of the ancient people? Is not that a gross violation of the *two first commandments*, and of all the moral precepts of the Scripture, on the subject?

To *take the name of the Lord in vain;* to make rash and false oaths, is also positively forbidden, and represented, as so great a sin, that it is said, that *God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain;* that is, that He will *certainly* and *severely* punish, one day, *him that sweareth falsely by His name** — yet we ask here too; what sin is more common, and atrocious, inasmuch as it is a disgusting complication of impiety, hypocrisy, injustice and dishonesty; inasmuch as it breaks at once the most sacred ties of society, and inflicts the greatest misfortunes on many who are the innocent victims of those who are guilty of that crime? We will not *particularize when*,—and *where* it is most unblushingly committed—The many instances

* Zechar. v. 4.

of it that are daily brought before the tribunals of justice, even before the senate, dispense us from entering into details.

If not only *murder* properly so called, but also all that which may lead to it, be prohibited, in the *sixth commandment*, as in all the holy Scriptures, ... How many are there whose violent temper and dispositions incite them to those outrages, provocations and threats that end in most tragical attempts? How many foster, in their heart, sentiments of anger, spite, malice, revenge, and especially of that *hatred* of which the Apostle says, that he who feeds it, . . . *abideth in death, and is a murderer*;* and why a *murderer!* because *hatred* causeth most murders; because he who is governed, by that passion, generally *wishes the death* of the person whom he hates; and would readily inflict it, were he not restrained, by the apprehension of the fatal consequences that might result from the perpetration of so heinous a crime.

A great many people imagine also that they have never sinned against the *eighth commandment, Thou shalt not steal*—But are those the only *robbers*, who appropriate to themselves, by open force, or violence, that which belongs to

* 1 John iii. 14, 15.

others? Do not those infringe it who employ their credit and their authority, to usurp, and retain the property of the weak, and defenceless, without his consent? Those, who, by chicanery, cunning, and tricks, or denial of a deposit, or fraudulent bankruptcy, work the ruin of those who trusted them? The unjust, and artful pleader? The dishonest gambler? Tradesfolks, and workmen who do not conscientiously acquit themselves, in their respective employments? Those who cheat, in commercial transaction, by false weight, or measures, or by the adulteration of the commodities which they sell—those, who like usurers, make an exorbitant profit in their mercantile affairs? Those who take advantage of the ignorance, or distress of the sellers, or journeymen, to get their merchandize, or labour, under its real value? Those who defraud, or embezzle the money of the *state*, of the *Church*, or of the *poor;* or who encourage and favour the defrauders? Those, who, by a fictitious character, or appearance, obtain alms destined only to the truly indigent? All those debtors, who, by a long delay of the payment of their debts or even absolute refusal, plunge their creditors into misery? In short, to wrong any one in his property, or right; and not to observe towards our neighbour, the same

good faith, and the same delicacy of conscience, which we wish them to observe towards us, is it not, to all intents and purposes, a robbery, equally condemned, by all the *moralists* as by the *eighth commandment*, and all the other sacred precepts of which we will quote some of the principal.

*Woe unto him that buildeth his house, by unrighteousness; and his chambers, by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service, without wages, and giveth him not for his work!**—*Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it: for, he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it, lest he cry against thee, unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.*†—*Let no man defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forwarned you, and testified*‡—*ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child: if thou afflict them in any way; and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry: and my wrath shall wax hot,* &c.§—*Rob not the poor, because he is poor; neither oppress the*

* Jerem. xxii. 13.
† Deut. xxiv. 14, 15.
‡ 1 Thess. iv. 6.
§ Exod. xxii. 22. 24.

*afflicted in the gate:** *for, the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them—Be not deceived: neither the unrighteous, nor thieves, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God.*†—*A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight*‡—*shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weight?*§—*Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*||

Shall we speak of that *malignity* with which we search, exaggerate and publish the defects of others; and of those vices connected with it, as *calumny, detraction, rash and severe judgments; eagerness* to receive and *envenom all reports*, unfavourable to the character, or reputation of our neighbour?

Shall we speak of that *unbounded luxury* that has invaded, contaminated, confounded all ranks in society?

Shall we speak of those publick houses of spoliation, where fraud and cunning employ all their artifices to entice youth, alas! too easily seduced—of those *haunts of perdition* where the patrimony of all ranks and conditions is swal-

* Prov. xxii. 22, 23. † 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.
‡ Prov. xi. 1. § Mich. vi. 11.
|| Prov. iii. 27.

yet, they readily lead a wicked life is such a painful sentiment, as to be insupportable.

*Men, and Brethren! What then shall we do?** Shall we continue to trust in lying words saying: *The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord*† ... without *doing the will of the Father which is in Heaven*; without *amending our ways?* Shall we continue to *draw nigh unto the Lord, with our mouth, and honour Him in vain because we honour Him only with our lips; and our heart is far from Him*?‡ Shall we continue to substitute to the *reasonable service, acceptable unto Him.*§ ... *Doctrines*, observances, enactments, the *mere commandments of men*, and which are only fit to increase the derision of the impious scoffer, and to mislead the christian, in such a manner as to make him believe, that such *doctrines and observances* are the *whole of man*, the whole of his religious duty? Shall we continue to assimilate ourselves to those Pharisees whom the Saviour addressed in this damnatory language: *Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Who make long prayers; bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; who compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is*

* Acts ii. 37.
† Jerem. vii. 4.
‡ Matt. xv. 8.
§ Rom. xii. 1.

*made, make him two-fold more the child of Hell, than yourselves; who pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel; who make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within are full of extortion and excess; who outwardly appear righteous unto men but within are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.**

Or, shall we, knowing especially that the patience of the Lord has bounds; and that, when abused, it changes into wrath, shall we seriously act, in a manner consistent with our *publick worship?* Shall we endeavour, assisted by Divine Grace, to reform our manners, and to put daily in practice, in all our affairs, transactions and pleasures, . . . the precepts that are given us, every Sabbath?

Of these two paths, one is that of Christianity, safety, and happiness in this world, and in the world to come.

The other is the path of hypocrisy, of danger, of private and publick vice, and therefore of misery and punishments . . . can the choice be doubtful?

Let us then no longer offer to God, the scan-

* Matt. xxiii. 4. 11. 15. 23, 24, 25. 28.

dalous, abominable spectacle of the celebration of the day consecrated to his service, . . . without true faith, sincere repentance, and the daily practice of all *those things which are honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report.** Let not the very act of *hallowing that day*, . . . without the fruit, the *weekly Ultra Sabbatarian fruit* which it ought to produce, be added to our already numberless sins, and be added as an aggravation of them: In a word, let none of our devotions, whether publick, or private pass away, without a corresponding mark of advancement in sanctification—Then, and then only, will God accomplish that promise. . . . *No good thing will the Lord withhold from them that walk uprightly; But He will give them grace and glory.*†

* Phil. iv. 8. † Ps. lxxxiv. 12.

FINIS.

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